

Journey to the other side

Oliver Vilson
Celeg Hannas

08.05.2012

Introduction

- Applied as system analyst end of 2006.
- Started as junior-level tester 02.01.2007
- Wrote my first analysis 6 months later. Proved myself as Business and System analyst after I created analysis about a feature that business units lead analyst considered impossible.
- 1,5 years later was de facto head of testing for business unit and acted as back-up for Project Managers and analysts. Testing was mainly claims verifications and ad hoc testing. No formal structure and no management. Was left mainly alone to work in a corner (literally).
- Was sent to Eurostar conference where I met Michael Bolton. Had some long talks and got new motivation to continue as tester.
- Company's leading expert and unofficial head of Testing competence within 3 months after that. Head of Testing and QA wanted to implement TMMi models. Few months in I noticed it didn't work, couldn't change his mind.
- Burned out end of 2009 to due excess workload

Burning out & Time to reflect

- Average tester lasted less than 3 years before changing career or leaving – huge caps of in competence, no-one to learn from and no gurus. After certain level of competence achieved people left testing.
- Testing was constantly late and almost zero overview – prelive testing usually started evening before.
- Testers main function was seen as customer support.
- TMMi just didn't work – only 1 project out of 5 was capable of implementing it to some level. Other projects actually lost something because of that.
- So – testing was unmotivational work, low reputation as profession, never given enough time, never appreciated and was considered as monkey-work.
- Minimal collaboration – „morphological search story“
- Most of local testing community seemed to be in the same uncollaborative state – something had to be done!!!
- After hundreds and thousands of pages blog postings/articles/books/lines of skype sessions I decided to change the local view and understanding about testing – started my own company.

And so it began...

- Established company that doesn't work only to create profit – but to improve testing in general.
- Conception of Test Camps' created and first Test Camp held within 2 months later.
- First course about Context-Driven testing within 3 months.
- First large testing course – to bring someone better to teach in Estonia.

Shift to the either side

- First company ever to offer rapid testing as service in Estonia. Second company in Estonia actually implementing SBTM.
- I became like outcast – most development companies didn't want anything to do with me because I contradicted their dogmas and understandings (and was very loud about it).
- Had to fight 3 things at the same time
 - my customers' understanding of testing – if development companies have some understanding (even when I don't agree with that), then customers who wanted testing didn't even knew that much.
 - 0-trust in my company since we were new and used unknown approach.
 - competition trying to stop me (several buy-out offers during first year of activity)

Rapid Testing as a Service

- Challenges
 - The pitch
 - Various dogmas
 - Lack of connections

What I learned?

- It's actually not that hard to sell ET or SBTM.
- High level business people want results, not process. Stories, not numbers.
- People are willing to listen if your solution solves some of their problems.
- Team to start with.

Present day

- Revolution is on the way – several companies are pushing forward in more Context-Driven approach and embracing ET as weapon-of-choice at least partially.
- Easier to sell SBTM and ET due to financial crash. Attributes that almost destroyed my company are now working in favor.

Future

- Changing one company at a time – ISTQB requirements are gone from most testers job offers.
- Governmental organizations are slowly giving up the certification needs. References instead of certifications are counting more and more.
- Community is growing, have had 2 Peer Conferences, 2 meet-ups in Tartu, several test camps etc.

Questions?

Oliver Vilson

Email: oliver@hannas.ee

Twitter @OliverV

Skype: olivervilson